DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 334 627 CS 507 600

AUTHOR Stewart, Charles J.

TITLE Teaching Interviewing for Career Preparation. Second, Revised, Enlarged Edition.

INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN.; Speech Communication Association, Annandale, Va.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-927516-26-8
PUB DATE 91
CONTRACT RI88062001
NOTE 95p.
AVAILABLE FROM ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Indiana University, 2805 E. 10th St., Suite 150, Bloomington, IN 47408-2698 ($8.95 plus $2.00 postage and handling); Speech Communication Association, 5105 Backlick Rd., Building E, Annandale, VA 22003 ($8.95 plus $2.00 postage and handling).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Communication Skills; *Employment Interviews; Higher Education; High Schools; Interpersonal Communication; Job Applicants; Questioning Techniques; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Communication Behavior; Communication Context; *Communication Strategies

ABSTRACT

This book is intended to aid high school and college instructors in designing and teaching units or courses in the fundamentals of both informational and employment interviewing. The communication skills considered in the book will aid students in understanding and handling important interviewing situations that they will encounter in every job throughout their lives. The skills developed in the book are equally important for a journalist, poll taker, or any fact finder bent on amassing information through the interview process. Sections of the first part of the book are: Interviewing Defined; Interviewing and Other Forms of Communication; Fundamentals of Interviewing; Informational Interviewing; and Employment Interviewing. The second part of the book presents three sets of practical exercises: (1) Becoming Aware of Your Involvement in Interviews; (2) Learning the Principles of Interviewing; and Practicing Interviewing Skills. A list of 76 resources for further reading are attached. (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 384622

Teaching Interviewing for Career Preparation

- ✓ Becoming Aware of Your Involvement in Interviewing
- ✓ Learning the Principles of Interviewing
- ✓ Practicing Interviewing Skills

Charles J. Stewart
Purdue University

CS 507600

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills
Speech Communication Association

Teaching Interviewing for Career Preparation

(Second, revised, enlarged edition)

Charles J. Stewart
Purdue University

ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

SCA Speech Communication Association

Published 1991 by:
ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills
Carl B. Smith, Director
2805 East 10th Street, Suite 150
Bloomington, Indiana 47408-2698
and
Speech Communication Association
James L. Gaudino, Executive Director
5105 Backlick Road, Building E
Annandale, Virginia 22003

Editor: Warren Lewis, ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. Typesetting and design at ERIC/RCS.

SCA Consultant Readers: Robert K. Avery, Chair, SCA Interboard Committee, University of Utah; James L. Gaudino, Executive Director, SCA National Office; Christopher H. Spicer, Pacific Lutheran University; Jimmie D. Trent, Miami University; Judith S. Trent, University of Cincinnati.

This publication was prepared with partial funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RI88062001. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

The author submitted this manuscript in response to a call by the Speech Communication Association (SCA) for publications on topics of increasing interest to communication teachers. The manuscript was then submitted to consultant readers for critical review and determination of professional competence. This publication has met such standards. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the SCA or the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Stewart, Charles J.
Teaching interviewing for career preparation / Charles J. Stewart.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-927516-26-8
1. Employment interviewing. I. Title.
HF5549.5.I6S74 1991
650.14—dc20 91-35649
CIP

ERIC/RCS Advisory Board

Joan Baker
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, Ohio

Douglas Barnard
Mesa Public Schools
Mesa, AZ 85203

Nancy Broz
Moorestown, New Jersey

Jeanne Chall
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

James Eckel
Dept. of Defense Dependents' Schools
Centreville, VA 22032

George A. Gonzales
Pan American University
Edinburg, TX 78539

Donald Gray
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

Richard P. Johns
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242

Peter K. Mitchell, Jr.
International Reading Association
Newark, DE 19714-8139

P. David Pearson
University of Illinois
Champaign, IL 61801

M. Donald Thomas
Educational Consultant to
Governor of Tennessee
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

Sam Weintraub
SUNY-Buffalo
Buffalo, NY 14260

SCA Advisory Board

Phil Backlund
Central Washington University
Ellensburg, WA 98926

James Chesbro
Speech Communication Association
Annandale, VA 22003

Ann Q. Stanton
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195

Patricia Kearney
California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840

James Darsey
Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210

Nancy Oft-Rose
Churchill High School
Eugene, OR 97403

Kathleen Galvin
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL 60208

Paul Arnston
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL 60208

Melissa Beall
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614

Bill Seiler
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE 68588

Kenneth Brown
University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Amherst, MA 01003

Philip Gray
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115

SCA Advisory Board (Continued)

Timothy G. Plax
California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840

Dick Hunsaker
Belleville West High School
Belleville, IL 62221

Debbie Atwater
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

Don Boileau
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA 22030

Ann Darling
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Urbana, IL 61801

Lea Stewart
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

Arlie Daniel
East Central State University
Ada, OK 74820

Cassandra Book
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

Mary Bozzik
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614

Gus Friedrich
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019

Debbie Simon
Milton Academy
MIlton, MA 02186

Diana Prentice Carlin
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045

Ellen Hay
Augustana College
Rock Island, IL 61201

Jo Sprague
San Jose State University
San Jose, CA 95192

Davie Giese
Mason City High School
Mason City, IA 50401

Sharon Ratliffe
Golden West College
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

William Gudykunst
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634

Jody Nyquist
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195

Judy C. Pearson
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701

M.E. Snively
Belleville East High School
Bellevile, IL 62221

Carolyn Calloway-Thomas
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

Janice W. Anderson
SUNY College at New Paltz
New Paltz, NY 12561

Rebecca Rubin
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Jerry Feezel
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Pamela Gray
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Table of Contents

Introduction to Interviewing 1

Interviewing Defined 2

Interviewing and Other Forms of Communication 5

Fundamentals of Interviewing 5

Informational Interviewing 15

Employment Interviewing 22

Practical Exercises 35

Set 1:
Becoming Aware of Your Involvement in Interviews 36

Set 2:
Learning the Principles of Interviewing 41

Set 3:
Practicing Interviewing Skills 62

Resources for Further Reading 82

INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEWING

Every year thousands of students complete their formal educations, search for positions, and begin careers. Few, especially high-school graduates, have ever taken part in job interviews or had any formal training in interviewing, either for employment or for other reasons. The job search is often frightening, frustrating, and unsuccessful because applicants have vague or erroneous conceptions of, on the one hand, the kinds of questions that employers ask, the abilities and characteristics that they look for, and the information that they may provide; and, on the other hand, the homework that applicants need to do prior to interviews, the kinds of questions that they should ask, and the information that they ought to obtain during interviews. When graduates occupy their first positions and launch their careers, they discover that effective interviewing skills are required every day. They must get and give information about many aspects of their work:

- tasks
- completed projects
- responsibilities
- procedures
- problems
- attitudes
- beliefs
- products
- status
- reports

- clients
- customers
- patients

Graduates are thrust into complex interviewing processes about which they have had little warning, let alone training or experience.

This book is designed to aid high school and college instructors in designing and teaching units or courses in the fundamentals of both informational and employment interviewing. The skills developed in these exercises will be of immeasurable value to high-school and college graduates in understanding and handling important interviewing situations that they will encounter in every job throughout their lives. These skills are equally important for a journalist, a poll taker, or any fact finder bent on amassing information through the interview process.

INTERVIEWING DEFINED

What is an interview? An interview is more, and less, than a conversation because it is limited by a predetermined and serious purpose. This limitation suggests advance planning and some purpose other than mere enjoyment or passing the time of day. An interview may involve more than two people (e.g., two members of a company interviewing an applicant, or a supervisor giving instructions to three employees) but never more nor less than two parties (i.e., an interviewer party and an interviewee party). An interview is relational because of the interpersonal connection between the parties. This connection results from previous encounters (a relational history), the roles being played, status differences between the parties, and these three dimensions:

inclusion
: how much each party wants to take part in the interview

control
: how much power each party has in determining the nature and outcome of the interaction

affection

the degree of warmth or friendship that exists between the parties

An interview is a complex communication process that includes numerous interacting variables:

- language
- nonverbal symbols
- nonverbal actions
- perceptions
- methods of listening
- situational constraints

Taking turns from time to time, both parties must speak and listen:

- exchange ideas
- feelings
- attitudes
- concepts
- values
- expectations

An interview must have a degree of order or structure without being fixed. Nearly all interviews involve asking and answering questions.

Types of interviewing

This definition encompasses a wide range of interviewing activities.

Informational interviews:

- information giving
- instructions
- reports

- training
- orientation
- coaching
- information getting
- surveys
- polls
- medical diagnoses

Many kinds of investigations, including these:

- in-depth journalism
- police reports
- insurance claims
- academic research

Employment interviews:

- hiring (screening and determinate)
- placement
- performance appraisal
- reprimands
- separation
- exit

Counseling interviews help persons gain insights into, and cope with, many kinds of problems:

- career
- educational
- marital
- physical
- mental
- emotional problems

Problem-solving interviews deal with mutually shared problems that may be organizational, task-related, or financial. Persua-

sive interviews include efforts to change the way another person thinks, feels, or acts in such as capacities as these:

- selling
- campaigning
- recruiting
- morale building
- fundraising

INTERVIEWING AND OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Interviews tend to be less formal and structured than speeches, lectures, and small-group interactions, and more formal and structured than conversations. Participation of both parties is more equal in interviews than in speeches, lectures, and small groups, but less equal than in conversations. In fact, if one party does all of the speaking, and the other all of the listening, no interview has taken place—merely a speech to an audience of one. The interview is unique in these ways:

- emphasis on questions
- frequent switching of roles (e.g., a sales person may be interviewer one moment when asking questions and getting information, and interviewee the next moment when answering questions and giving information)
- need for constant adaptive behavior
- intimate setting
- tolerated or planned digressions to relax one or both parties or to reduce tensions

FUNDAMENTALS OF INTERVIEWING

Communication principles

No communication principles are unique to the interview, but the intimate one-to-one setting tends to *magnify* important principles. For example, feedback is more immediate and direct because

the parties are usually not much farther than an arm's length apart, and the listener may interrupt at any time. Every action by either party may be noticed and interpreted in a meaningful way:

* raising an eyebrow
* frowning
* looking puzzled
* shifting in a chair
* smiling
* yawning

Eye-contact (or the lack of it) and the way one shakes the other's hand, touches, or gestures may communicate quite opposite states of mind:

* trust / lack of trust
* interest / disinterest
* sincerity / insincerity
* warmth / coldness
* poise / discomfort
* self-confidence / vulnerability

Environmental factors also impact interviews significantly (temperature, humidity, surroundings, and lighting), proxemics—one's use and perception of social and personal space (seating arrangement and distance between parties), physical appearance (length of hair, amount of make-up) and dress (flashy, conservative, "professional"). Voice quality communicates as much as, or more than, words themselves.

If you are to be successful in interviews, you must share language and meanings or, as Irving Lee wrote, you will talk past one another rather than with one another (Lee, 1952). Words are merely arbitrary and imperfect symbols that often have multiple meanings; they change over time; and they differ from place to place, situation to situation, profession to profession, and person to person. Slight changes in spelling or the way words are spoken can

cause major changes in perceived meanings. You can communicate more successfully if you do the following:

(1) are aware of current meanings

(2) adapt to each person, place, and situation

(3) understand and use appropriate professional or social jargon

(4) strive for specificity in word selection

(5) explain and illustrate your words

(6) define technical terms or ones being used differently from common usage

(7) never *assume* that accurate communication has taken place

Interviewers and interviewees must understand what motivates parties to interact and respond as wished. First of all, they must be aware of three sets of perceptions that operate in each interview because these perceptions significantly affect motivations:

- how each party perceives itself and the other party
- how the other party perceives itself and its opposite
- how the two parties perceive the interviewing situation

Once interview parties understand these perceptions, they can then structure and conduct interviews designed to motivate themselves and others. For instance, a person can enhance motivation by orienting the other party according to the following checklist:

- What is the purpose of the interview?
- Why and how this party was selected?
- How the interview will proceed?
- How the information will be used?
- What will happen after the interview ends?

Common courtesy is last on the list because it is most important:

- Make others aware of potential benefits.
- Deal with the others as thinking and feeling persons.

- Be just and fair.
- Adapt to the needs of others.
- Maintain good verbal and nonverbal communication.

Listening types and principles

Listening is vital to communication and motivation within interviews. If either party does not listen effectively, then important ideas, feelings, and information may be lost or received inaccurately. If either party perceives that the other is not listening attentively or appropriately, then the result is liable to be lessened motivation to listen and contribute.

Each of three approaches to listening serves important and different functions in the interview (Wolvin and Coakley, 1988; Steil, Barker, and Watson):

- Listening to comprehend is primarily a method of receiving information, the purpose being to understand material received and to remain objective.
- Listening with empathy is primarily a method of one person telling another: "I understand you as a person." Empathy is a sense for the concerns, feelings, and limitations of other people. The purpose of listening with empathy is to reassure, comfort, and express warmth.
- Listening to evaluate is primarily a method of judging or criticizing information received, the purpose being to determine whether the information received is comprehensible, accurate, acceptable, and complete.

Interview parties can improve their listening, first by selecting the most appropriate approach for the interview purpose and situation, and then second by following a few guidelines:

- Be judgmental only after having comprehended what is received.
- Listen for feelings as well as for facts.
- Listen to the content as well as how it is said.

- ✧ Focus on critical content and main ideas.
- ✧ Be patient.
- ✧ Interrupt only when absolutely necessary.
- ✧ Answer a question only after fully understanding it.
- ✧ Ask carefully crafted questions if what is said is not understood.
- ✧ Pay attention to everything that is said or asked and how it is said or asked.
- ✧ Keep convictions and prejudices under control.
- ✧ Do not allow emotion-laden words to interfere with listening.

With the following cues, let the other party know that you are listening and interested (Leonard, 1983):

- ✧ Face the person squarely.
- ✧ Adopt an open posture.
- ✧ Lean toward the other party.
- ✧ Stay relatively relaxed.
- ✧ Maintain good eye contact.
- ✧ Reflect attention through facial expressions.
- ✧ Attend with vocal cues such as "um-hmmm" and "yes."

Silence is closely related to listening. Many people avoid silence at any cost, but silence can serve important communicative functions, both positive and negative. Silence can express completely opposite responses:

- agreement or disagreement
- interest or disinterest
- belief or disbelief
- self-confidence or self-doubt

One interview party may interpret another's silence across a range of possibilities:

- as exhibiting a lack of sufficient information
- as sensing no urgency to respond
- as a careful pondering of exactly what to say
- as an avoidance of controversial or sensitive matters
- as a hesitation to respond to an unclear or complex question or answer

Interviewers and interviewees need to remember that silence is not a void—communication is taking place.

Structuring interviews

Interviewers can divide interviews, like speeches, into three parts: opening, body, and closing. The opening often affects the willingness of both parties to communicate freely and to reveal feelings, attitudes, perceptions, and information. During the opening, the parties need to establish rapport, develop a sense of trust between the participants, and orient the interviewee as to purpose, methods, and expectations. Interviewees typically want to know the following:

- who the interviewer is and represents
- how and why the interviewee was selected
- what will be demanded
- how the interview will proceed
- how long it will take
- how information given will be used

An interview can include, modify, or combine any number of interview "starters" for effective ice-breaking:

- summary of the need
- explanation of how the need was discovered
- mention of an incentive or reward
- request for advice or assistance
- reference to the known position of the interviewee

- reference to the person who sent the interviewer
- reference to the organization that the interviewer represents
- request for a specified period of time
- asking a question

It's up to the interviewer to select one or more starters, and add verbal and nonverbal behavior most appropriate for the situation, the purpose of the interview, the interviewee, and the relationship that exists between interviewer and interviewee (Krivonos and Knapp, 1975).

Interviewers may divide the body of the interview as follows:

- according to common organizational sequences (time, topic, space, cause-effect, problem-solution)
- functions or roles of interviewer and interviewee (questions from employer, information on the position and organization, and questions from the applicant)
- key questions (what, when, where, who, how, and why)
- question sequences (funnel, inverted funnel, tunnel, and quintamensional design).

The funnel sequence begins with a broad, open-ended question, and it proceeds to more closed questions. The funnel is most useful when the interviewee knows the subject matter well and wants to talk. The initial open question poses less of a threat than a closed question, is less prone to interviewer bias in which the interviewee responds the way he or she thinks the interviewer wishes, and it can serve to relax the interviewee.

The inverted funnel sequence begins with a highly closed question and proceeds to more open questions. The initial closed question allows the interviewer to motivate a person to respond, to jog a person's memory, or to serve as a "warm-up" period.

The tunnel sequence is a series of similar questions, either open or closed. This series of questions is designed to obtain reactions or attitudes toward persons, places, things, or issues.

The quintamensional sequence is designed to assess intensity of feelings and attitudes (Gallup, 1947). This five-step sequence proceeds from a person's awareness of an issue to uninfluenced attitudes, specific attitudes, reasons why, and intensity of attitude.

In the closing, the interviewer needs to do the following:

- maintain the rapport established during the opening and body of the interview
- orient the interviewee as to what will happen next, making no promises that cannot be kept
- prepare for future contacts

Effective interviewers avoid false closings in which they seem to bring an interview to a close only to continue for several minutes. Interviewers use many common closing techniques (Knapp, *et al.*, 1973):

- offer to answer questions
- ask a "clearinghouse" question to see if they have obtained all important information
- declare that the task or purpose is completed
- make a personal inquiry
- signal that the time allotted has expired
- explain the reason for the closing
- express appreciation or satisfaction
- exhibit a personal concern
- plan for the next encounter
- summarize the interview

Interviewers also have available many nonverbal ways to signal that the closing is commencing:

- straightening up in one's seat
- leaning forward
- standing up
- moving away from the other party
- uncrossing legs, placing hands on knees as if preparing to rise
- breaking eye contact
- offering to shake hands
- making various hand movements
- smiling
- looking at a clock or watch

Appropriate verbal and nonverbal closing techniques can reinforce what has been accomplished, and they prepare the way for future contacts.

Types and uses of questions

Interviewers and interviewees have a limitless variety of questions at their disposal, but each question has these three characteristics:

- open or closed
- primary or secondary
- neutral or leading

Open questions give respondents considerable freedom in determining the kind and amount of information to give: "What happened at the meeting last night?" Answers to open questions reveal what respondents think is important, obtain important information that interviewers might not think to ask for, relax respondents, and get respondents talking at length.

Closed questions give respondents little freedom in determining the kind and amount of information to give: "Do you agree with the decision to reopen construction bids?" Interviewers have considerable control over responses to closed questions, can ask more

questions in less time, can get at specific information desired, and can replicate, code, and tabulate answers more easily. However, brief answers, particularly yes or no answers, do not reveal reasons for answers, degrees or intensity of feelings, or details of events or thinking.

Primary questions introduce topics or new areas within a topic; they make sense when taken out of context: "Tell me about your school." Secondary or probing questions attempt to elicit additional information following a primary or another secondary question, particularly when a person does not respond, or an answer seems incomplete, superficial, vague, suggestive, irrelevant, or inaccurate.

Secondary questions include the following kinds of probes:

* *silent probes* in which the questioner remains silent and encourages the respondent to explain, change an answer, give further information, and so on
* *nudging probes* ("Go on!" "And then?" "Uh huh?")
* *clearinghouse probes* ("Is there anything else you can tell me about this accident?" "Have I missed anything?" "Any other questions?")
* *informational probes* ("Tell me more about. . . ." "What happened after . . . .?" "Explain what you mean when you say . . . .")
* *reflective probes* that attempt to clarify or verify a response ("Then what you're saying is . . . ?" "Am I correct in assuming . . . ?" "Was that in 1987 or 1988?")
* *mirror probes* help one understand accurately a series of answers or agreements ("We have agreed, then, that you will talk to John about changing the date to March 5, and will see if Mary and Doug will support this proposal. I will contact IBM about delaying our meeting until we've had a chance to determine a new date. And we'll talk again no later than Friday?")

Neutral questions allow the interviewee to respond without direction or pressure from the interviewer: "Tell me about your current position." "When did you select your major?" Leading questions can suggest either implicitly or explicitly the answer expected or desired: "You don't enjoy the long hours of your current position, do you?" "Didn't you select your major because it was easier than others?" A leading question may be *loaded* if it contains very strong language or entrapment: "How do you feel about the jerks down at the unemployment office?" "Are you still cheating your customers?" Normally, interview parties should avoid leading questions if they want accurate and honest answers, but leading questions can be valuable. They may show respondents that a whole range of answers is acceptable, reveal how persons can respond under pressure, provoke or prod reluctant respondents, or get agreement.

Effective interviewing requires that you follow a few rules:

- Phrase all questions carefully.
- Use language that the respondent will understand.
- Be sure that all questions are, and appear to be, relevant to the respondent.
- Do not ask for information beyond what the respondent can be expected to have.
- Phrase all questions as simply and clearly as possible because complex questions may confuse and lead to inaccurate answers.
- Social, psychological, or situational constraints require that you ask questions that match the respondent's ability to answer.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Principles of giving information

Giving information from one person to another is a deceptively difficult and complex process, especially when this information will

be transmitted through several persons (Stewart, 1991; Stewart and Cash, 1991). Each subsequent transmission is likely to contain omissions, changes, distortions, or additions. Important qualifiers tend to get lost in the shuffle, with a "maybe" becoming a certainty, or a tentative proposal becoming a final decision. Loss or distortion of information may result due to a variety of aspects in the physical setting:

- noise
- distance between parties
- lack of privacy
- distractions such as ringing telephones and people walking in and out of the area

Many persons have difficulty remembering information received for various reasons:

- poor memory
- poor listening habits
- nervousness
- poor state of health
- inability to comprehend figures or complex information

Role relationships (superior to subordinate) and the relationship between interviewer and interviewee (control, inclusion, and affection) may inhibit information gathering and reception.

Verbal and nonverbal transmission techniques—including questions, language, voice, and gestures—often deter rather than enhance information giving and retention.

Too often, both parties *assume* that information giving was successful when it was not. Information overload (amount, complexity, and detail) often results in loss of critical information. A study of information given between physicians and patients demonstrated that, within a few hours, 82% of patients could recall two items of information while only 36% could recall three or four

items, 12% could recall five or six items, and only 3% could recall seven or more items (Ley, 1966).

Interviewers can improve information giving, both transmission and retention, by reinforcing the verbal presentation of the message in the following ways:

- Use written handouts to backup oral interaction.
- Present information in a systematic manner that includes signposts such as "first, second, third."
- Employ summaries at the beginning, middle, and end of the interview.
- Define all terms and concepts that might be misunderstood.
- Select only relevant and significant information to avoid overload problems.
- Repeat information, concepts, and key terms strategically throughout the interview.

The following nonverbal aspects of the interaction can enhance information giving, as well:

- Interviewers need to speak distinctly, and loud enough to be heard comfortably.
- Pronounce all words carefully and correctly.
- Use oral punctuation, emphasis, and pauses to draw attention to important data, qualifiers, feelings, and meanings.
- Watch and listen for feedback to detect when communication is effective and when it is not.
- Use visual aids, such as charts, maps, diagrams, models, objects, and pictures.

The old saying that "one picture is worth a thousand words" is still around because it's true.

The interviewer can facilitate the interview in the following ways:

- Encourage the respondent to be an active participant during the interview.
- Welcome questions throughout the interview, not only at the end.
- Ask the interviewee to repeat or explain important points, steps, or facts to check for accuracy of transmission, understanding, and retention.
- Encourage notetaking and tape recording of interactions.
- Limit the number of persons through whom the information must pass.

Losses, distortions, additions, and modifications are liable to occur each time information is passed orally from one person to another.

Principles of gathering information

The process of gathering information is as complex and difficult as giving information.

- Interviewers must know the purpose or purposes of each interview. For instance:
  - Do they want to elucidate, observe, discover, examine, challenge, or expose facts, events, personalities, attitudes, opinions, or actions?
  - How do they intend to use the information gained?
  - Do they want to generalize to all workers or particular types of workers?
  - Or will they want to make predictions, produce a report or news story, prescribe a solution or action, determine a cause or effect?
- Interviewers must be aware of long-range as well as short-range goals. The situation in which they operate often determines specific purposes, uses, and limitations of information-gathering interviews.

- Interviewers must understand and follow the rules laid down by the organization they represent or the persons they plan to interview.
- Interviewers must be thoroughly briefed on all aspects of the topic. They need to know the available facts, and be aware of possible problems and potential solutions, particularly solutions that have been, or are being, tried.
- Interviewers who are in search of information about a topic also need to know everything they can find out from all available sources of information before they enter the interview. Knowledge that can be otherwise acquired need not be gained from valuable and always limited interview time.

An interviewer needs to develop an interview structure appropriate to the purpose, topic, and end product. If the interview is to be informal, simple, and brief, an interview guide of topics and subtopics may be sufficient. Journalists, for example, have traditionally operated from the simple guide of question words: who, what, when, where, how, and why. If the interview is to be formal, complex, and lengthy, a moderate schedule of primary and possible secondary questions developed from the guide may be useful. If the interview is to be both formal, complex, and lengthy, and the interviewer desires as well to make a series of interviews as similar as possible, then a highly scheduled interview guide that includes all primary and secondary questions is called for. If the interviewer wants "scientific" results from virtually identical interviews, then a highly scheduled, standardized interview format that includes both the questions and the answer options, is best.

Interviewers must select interviewees with care. The following questions may be used to qualify interviewers:

- Do they have the information needed?
- Are they available to be interviewed for the length of time needed?
- Are they willing to give the desired information?
- Are they able to give information freely and accurately?

If interviewers learn as much about interviewees as possible prior to the interviews, they can plan ways not to be taken by surprise. Interviewees are not always cooperative; they are often otherwise:

- hostile
- reticent
- emotional
- evasive
- confused
- embarrassed
- overly talkative

If interviewers are going to conduct polls or surveys, they must determine how many persons to interview in a carefully prescribed target population that becomes a representative sample of the whole. Demographic characteristics that may be significant include the following:

- age
- education
- sex
- race
- geographical background
- religion
- occupation
- income
- affiliations

Interviewers may need certain percentages, for instance, of male and female college graduates of different ages from both rural and urban areas to have a truly representative sample of interviewees from a target population.

Selecting interviewers is as important as selecting interviewees. If an interview is to be free-wheeling, and the interviewer is

free to probe, then the interviewer should be a keen observer, listener, and questioner who is both patient and persistent. Role differences may enhance or detract from the information-gathering process by making the interviewee more (or less) willing, motivated, or obligated to give accurate and adequate information. At times it would be best for the interviewer to be superior to the interviewee (professor to student, supervisor to subordinate, president to vice president). At other times they need to be equals (student to student, teacher to teacher, business manager to business manager). At other times, the interviewer needs to be subordinate to the interviewee (vice president to president, student to teacher, subordinate to supervisor). If the interview is to be a highly structured survey or poll, the interviewer needs to manifest the following characteristics:

- someone who follows instructions and rules carefully
- someone familiar with the prescribed questions and answer options
- someone friendly and non-threatening
- someone interested in the topic and project

Questions are the tools used to gather information, and usually the quality of information depends upon the selection and use of these tools. Less formal and structured interviews, such as journalistic and police investigations, rely heavily on open questions and a variety of probing or secondary questions. Formal and structured interviews, such as polls, surveys, and research studies, rely more on closed questions and questions presenting interviewees with standardized answer options according to which they register their correct age, religious affiliation, geographical location, etc.; give their opinions along a scale such as "strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree."

Taking notes and recording answers are important for thorough and accurate reports. If interviewers are going to take notes, they should ask permission ahead of time, preserve effective communication by maintaining eye contact, and listen carefully to

each answer. They might use some form of shorthand (personal or professional) so that they can take notes quickly and maintain the natural flow of conversation with interviewees. Interviewers must not "telegraph" reactions to interviewees' answers, lest the interviewees begin to give safe and superficial answers or ones responded to positively. If interviewers are recording answers on a survey form, they must understand the options and record answers accurately and clearly so that others can tabulate the answers effectively at a later time. A tape recorder is helpful if the interviewee permits its use, and does not withhold full disclosure of information for fear that the recording may be played back later to his or her detriment. Interviewers are wise to learn how to use the recorder ahead of time and place it out of the way so that it does not interfere with the free flow of information.

EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWING

When you teach a unit on the employment or selection interview, keep these three goals in mind:

- The short-range goal is to help your students be able to seek and obtain good positions.
- The intermediate-range goal is to help your students learn how to conduct effective employment interviews when they become members of organizations and sit on the other side of the table.
- The long-range goal is to improve the employee selection process that has too long relied upon poor role models, experiences as applicants, and tradition.

A unit on the selection interview cannot provide simple formulas, shortcuts to success, or surefire answers to questions. Studying the strategies of the interview process, however, can prepare your students for the hard work of obtaining positions or selecting applicants, provide guidelines for conducting typical interviews, and introduce students to valuable resources (Arvey and Campion, 1982).

The employer and the employment interview

An employer-interviewer might well begin by carefully reviewing the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) rules and regulations, constitutional amendments, federal and state legislative acts, and executive orders that have determined what constitute *bona fide occupational qualifications* (BFOQ). For most positions, written or oral inquiries that delve into a number of protected areas are defined as discriminatory and unlawful (Shaeffer, 1975; Siegel, 1989; Bloom and Prien, 1989; Newman, 1989):

- ✓ sex
- ✓ race
- ✓ color
- ✓ physical appearance
- ✓ age
- ✓ national origin
- ✓ citizenship
- ✓ ethnic identity
- ✓ religious obligations
- ✓ political opinion
- ✓ handicaps
- ✓ military record.

Recognized BFOQs are defined to be the following topics:

- ✓ work and work-related experiences
- ✓ education
- ✓ training
- ✓ skills
- ✓ physical attributes
- ✓ work-related personality traits.

These two simple guidelines can prevent interviewers from asking unlawful questions:

#1: Do not treat female, handicapped, or ethnic minority applicants differently from others.

#2: Do not ask questions of anyone that you would not ask of everyone.

Determine the exact nature and qualifications of each position to be filled. Many organizations develop "applicant profiles" of ideal applicants for various positions. A profile may originate from a competency model of traits and skills, and be determined by research on individuals who have done the job well. Some organizations use a "behavior-based selection technique" to match applicants with the applicant profile. These four principles underline this technique:

(1) Behavior that is observable can be traced.

(2) Behavior that is not seen can be probed for through careful questioning.

(3) The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.

(4) Job-related behavior in the interview is a good predictor of future job performance. (Dalessio and Imada, 1984; Daly, Richmond, and Leth, 1979; Savage, 1985; Schneider-Jenkins and Carr-Rufino, 1985).

Interviewers need to select and prepare carefully all materials that they will use during the selection process. These materials include the following:

- application forms
- standardized tests (aptitude, personality, honesty)
- evaluation forms

These materials must meet EEOC guidelines, and they must invite the information needed to make appropriate decisions (Siegel, 1980); above all, tests and forms serve to obtain information that cannot be obtained during interviews.

The selection process typically progresses through these three stages:

Step one:

Interviewers review information on each applicant prior to the interview, evaluate the results of any tests taken, check responses on the application form:

- Reread the application letter.
- Review the resumé for what it does and does not include.
- Contact references if appropriate.
- Read letters of recommendation carefully. (Applicants seek out persons who will write glowing letters and are unlikely to make negative comments.)

Step two:

Effective interviewers structure the interview carefully (Tengler and Jablin, 1983; Buckingham, 1985; Orpen, 1985 Axtmann and Jablin, 1986), by doing the following:

- Create an informal, relaxed atmosphere with an opening that establishes rapport and orients the applicant.
- Begin with open-ended, easy-to-answer questions that get the interviewee talking and into the flow of the interview.
- Avoid questions that violate EEOC laws and regulations.
- Avoid questions that do the following:
  - can be answered yes or no
  - lead the interviewee to respond the way the interviewee thinks the interviewer prefers
  - repeat questions asked on the application form
  - are double-barrelled and cover more than one area of inquiry
  - contain evaluative responses that may negatively affect answers to future questions

Effective interviewers listen and probe into answers before going to the next primary question.

Interviewers ought to ask two preliminary questions before they begin giving detailed information to the interviewee. These general questions are as follows: "What do you know about our organization?" and "What do you know about this position?" These questions allow interviewers to determine whether applicants have done their homework, and they give the interviewee a chance to speak up. Moreover, these questions elicit what information applicants already have so that the limited time allotted for interviews need not be wasted in redundancy. Following these preliminary questions and answers, the interviewer can fill in further information on the position and organization. Interviewers should always allow adequate time for applicants to ask questions. Applicant questions not only help the applicant gain insights into the position and organization but also they help the employer to assess the applicant's interests, maturity, intelligence, and preparation. A good interviewer closes on a positive note and informs the interviewee when a decision will be made.

Step three:

Interviewers should evaluate applicants as soon as the interview ends while answers, questions, and impressions are fresh in their minds. Many organizations provide evaluation forms with open and closed questions to help standardize the post-interview evaluation process.

Here are a few do's and don'ts for employer/interviewers:

- ★ Follow the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
- ★ Let the applicant do the talking.
- ★ Remember that two applicants are always present in an interview, the real person and the make-believe person who is trying to look and act his or her best to obtain a good position.
- ★ Listen, and probe into answers.
- ★ Remember that the interview is likely to be a major event for the applicant even though it may be routine and somewhat boring for the interviewer.

The applicant and the employment interview

Before the job interview takes place, applicants need to prepare themselves in the following ways:

(1) "Know thyself," as Socrates said.

(2) Do their homework.

(3) Get the paperwork ready.

Applicants need to begin the position-seeking process with a thorough self-analysis, for they cannot determine whether either general or specific positions are best for them, or answer questions insightfully, if they do not know themselves. Innocent-sounding questions such as "Tell me about yourself!" "Where do you hope to be five years from now?" and "What interests you most about this position/our organization?" are difficult to answer, and they require an ability to relate one's own realities to those of the job. As applicants look inside themselves, these questions turn up useful answers (Einhorn, 1977; Hutchinson and Spooner; Stewart, 1991):

* What are my personality, intellectual, communicative, educational, and professional strengths and weaknesses?
* What are my accomplishments and failures?
* What are my professional interests and disinterests?
* What do I want in a position and organization?
* What are my most valued needs as a professional and human being?
* Why did I attend my school...and study my best subjects...?
* What did I like most and least about my former position?

Successful applicants do their homework so that they can identify with the desired job, position, and organization. They learn everything they can about their field of employment:

* history
* developments
* trends

- leaders
- problems
- education/training requirements

They discover everything they can about the organizations for which they are applying to work:

- products and services (new and old)
- locations of plants
- offices
- divisions
- expansion or merger plans
- reputation
- history
- competitors
- financial status

They learn everything they can about the position for which they are applying:

- responsibilities and duties
- expectations
- required experiences
- necessary personal characteristics
- type of supervision
- salary range
- advancement potential
- job security
- relocation possibilities and probabilities
- location
- starting date

Knowing too little about the organization and position is a major common mistake of applicants. Savvy applicants keep up with current events, particularly ones related to their professional

interests. Applicants need to find out ahead of time by reading and talking with experienced employers and applicants about what happens in "typical" interviews.

Einhorn (1981) discovered that successful applicants typically manifested these characteristics in common:

- showed knowledge of the organization and position
- exhibited interest in, and approval of, both the position and organization
- had well-defined career goals consistent with the organization's interests

Applicants must prepare their documentary credentials with great care. (Donaho and Meyer, 1976; Einhorn, Bradley, and Baird, 1981). Address application letters to specific persons at organizations. Tailor each letter specifically to the organization and opening. Follow all guidelines for professional letter writing. Successful applicants prepare one or more resumés (depending upon the types of positions in which they are interested) that are best suited to them at specific points in their careers. Different jobs require different types of resumés:

- chronological (curriculum vitae)
- job skills, work experience
- job-specific goals
- reverse-chronology (most recent employment listed first)

Rules for resumé writing include the following:

- neat, blocked, one page, and not crowded
- complete name, addresses, and telephone numbers at the top
- a clear and specific career objective
- emphasis on relevant, position-specific education, experiences, and abilities
- clear signals that applicants are "doers" who are ready to enter the workforce or profession energetically

Applicants are set for the interview stage of the job search only after conducting a thorough job search. This effort may include the following:

- sending out dozens of resumés and letters
- using appropriate placement services (school or professional)
- applying for positions published in newspapers and professional publications
- contacting friends and acquaintances through personal networks

An applicant, under no circumstances whatsoever, should arrive late for an interview. A little ahead of time, but not too early, is best. Applicants need to be self-confident to avoid the self-fulfilling prophecy: "I knew I was going to fail, and I did." Applicants should dress neatly and appropriately; applicants need to be well groomed (unless the job is one in which it's a plus to look scruffy); applicants need to be courteous to all people they meet; the obnoxious person in the elevator may be the interviewer.

The first few minutes of the interview are crucial. (Zunin and Zunin, 1975). A good or bad first impression may affect the remainder of the interview positively or negatively. Here's how to get started:

- ★ Use a firm but not crushing handshake
- ★ Maintain good eye-contact, but without staring the interviewer down
- ★ Smile!
- ★ Be an active participant in the conversation
- ★ Answer questions directly and thoroughly, but without rambling.
- ★ The sooner the applicants begin talking, the sooner they will relax.

During the body of the interview, here's how successful applicants can keep things moving in the right direction (Einhorn, 1981):

- ★ Focus on your actions, answers, and questions.
- ★ Be alive and dynamic!
- ★ Be interested and show it.
- ★ Listen carefully to questions before answering.
- ★ Think while phrasing answers.
- ★ Answer questions thoroughly and to the point.
- ★ Be honest in everything you say.
- ★ Do not undersell or oversell yourself, your experiences, or your education.
- ★ Use good grammar, intelligent language, and appropriate professional jargon in answers.
- ★ Pause to give yourself time to think through responses to tough or tricky questions.
- ★ Refrain from delivering phony or canned answers to common questions. (Most experienced interviewers will see through these and nail applicants with probing questions.)
- ★ Provide evidence for all claims you make.
- ★ Do not rely only on personal experiences, but instead, use a variety of evidence in proof of claims, such as the following:
  - ☆ factual and hypothetical illustrations
  - ☆ statistics
  - ☆ comparisons
  - ☆ contrasts
  - ☆ testimonies from past and current employers
- ★ Accept responsibility for past actions or inactions.
- ★ Give explanations rather than excuses.
- ★ Cite compensating strengths for apparent weaknesses.

- ★ Never bad-mouth or reveal confidential information about a current or former employer.
- ★ Appear to be "doers" with well-defined goals and interests.
- ★ Without lying, do not admit to weakness: Find the strength in a supposed weakness, instead.

Successful applicants respond to unlawful questions cautiously. (Stewart and Cash, 1991; Wilson and Goodall, 1991) First, they ask themselves these questions:

- ✖ How serious is the violation?
- ✖ How much do I want or need this position?
- ✖ How representative of the organization is this interviewer?
- ✖ Did the interviewer seem to intend something untoward with the question (Is it a trick)?

Second, applicants select appropriate response strategies:

- ✖ If the violation is very serious, they may tactfully refuse to answer, with or without giving a reason for doing so. They may, for example, say that the information asked for is personal rather than professional. (Tactful refusals are very difficult in the employer-applicant relationship, because employers are likely to see any refusal as tactless and rude.)
- ✖ Applicants may inquire tactfully as to why the interviewer wants or needs this information for this position.
- ✖ Applicants may answer unlawful questions directly but briefly, and hope that employers will get back to lawful questions.
- ✖ Applicants may attempt to neutralize the interviewer's concern: "If either my spouse or I were offered a transfer, we would have to discuss the pros and cons before making a decision."

- Applicants may attempt to take advantage of the question by explaining, for instance, how a woman, a man over fifty, or an African-American would be best in this position.

Well-informed applicants come to employment interviews prepared to ask questions. Having no questions, or having too few questions, is a major common mistake of applicants. Successful applicants ask specific questions across a wide variety of areas, and they use all of the time allotted them. Guidelines for intelligent questioning of the interviewer include the following:

- Phrase all questions carefully and open-ended.
- Avoid the "me . . . me . . . me . . ." complex in which all questions pertain to what the employee will get out of the position. (The employer hopes that the applicant will contribute something to the organization.)
- Ask well-informed, mature questions. (Do not ask, for instance, "Got any benefits?" If the applicant's primary concerns seem to be salary, vacation time, and early retirement, the applicant is unlikely to become an employee.)

Because employers assume that applicants order questions in their hierarchy of importance, never ask about salary or benefits early in questioning the employer.

As the interview comes to a close, applicants would be wise to remember that "It's not over till it's over," and that means when interviewer and interviewee are out of sight and sound of one another. Be careful of every action and word; the interviewer is likely to take note of every detail. Applicants may play an active role in closing the interview by expressing, if appropriate, interest in the position and organization. It's never wrong for applicants to let a prospective employer know that they want the job. Appropriate eagerness is appealing to employers. Applicants may ask to know what happens next, and when, and what they are to do, and whom they may contact if they do not hear by the stated deadline.

Always write a follow-up letter. Follow-up letters are much more than mere courtesy; a follow-up letter helps keep your name and face in the interviewer's mind. A follow-up letter provides yet another opportunity to express interest in the position and organization, and it is the right way to make known any additional, pertinent, or late-breaking information.

Applicants must not expect immediate decisions, or make pests of themselves by contacting interviewers or organizations. Debriefing is a must after each interview. Applicants should ask themselves these questions:

- What did I do well?
- What did I do poorly?
- How might I have prepared better?
- Which questions posed difficulty for me?
- How appropriate and sufficient were my questions?
- About what information did I not get to make an informed decision concerning this position and organization?
- What might I do differently next time?

Never turn down a chance to interview for a job. Job applicants learn something new about themselves during every job interview.

PRACTICAL EXERCISES: MAKING STUDENTS AWARE OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN INTERVIEWS

The following sets of practical exercises have been designed with your students in mind. Each exercise is addressed directly to your students, and each is arranged on the page for the sake of clarity of understanding and ease of use. Feel free to photocopy these exercises and distribute them to your students for use both in and outside of class.

Set 1.
BECOMING AWARE OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN INTERVIEWS

Exercise 1.1: I'm an Interviewer and Didn't Know It.

Objective:

To demonstrate your day-to-day involvement in a variety of interviewing situations.

Activity:

Keep a detailed log of your one-to-one communication experiences during a seven-day period. Distinguish between interviewing and noninterviewing two-person conversations. Include notations on the following:

- ✏ the type of each interview
- ✏ its purpose, its duration
- ✏ which role you played (interviewer or interviewee)
- ✏ techniques used by each party, problems encountered
- ✏ outcome

Discussion:

- ✱ How were the several interviewing and non-interviewing two-person conversations similar and different?
- ✱ Were you more often the interviewer or the interviewee?
- ✱ How difficult was it to distinguish between interviewing and noninterviewing situations?
- ✱ Which types of interviews did you experience?
- ✱ How were the purposes of various types of interviews similar and different?
- ✱ How long were the longest and shortest interviews?
- ✱ In which situations were you the interviewer?
- ✱ In which situations were you the interviewee?
- ✱ Which role did you enjoy most?
- ✱ Which techniques did parties use in various interviewing situations?

* How did differing situations seem to affect the techniques employed?
* What problems did you encounter, and how did you handle them?

Variation:

Keep a detailed log of all communication experiences encountered during a seven-day period, keeping track of the following: interviewing and noninterviewing two-person conversations, small groups, public speaking, and written communications. Compare and contrast the types of communication experiences with respect to purpose, duration, roles of participants, techniques used, and problems encountered.

Exercise 1.2: Person-to-Person in the Mass Media

Objective:

To make you aware of the ways in which you are informed, persuaded, challenged, and entertained through mass-media interviews.

Activity:

Keep a log of televised interviewing situations that you watch during a seven-day period. Make at least one observation during each hour of the television day: 7:00 a.m. to midnight. Differentiate between interviewing and non-interviewing two-person conversations. Note time of day, type of program (news, talk show, commercial message, dramatic production, soap operas, comedy, variety show), type of interview, apparent purposes of the interview, special interviewing techniques used.

Discussion:

* What problems did you encounter in differentiating between interviewing and non-interviewing situations?
* What types of interviewing were observed?
* What were the apparent and not-so-apparent purposes of interviews?
* What unusual interviewing techniques did you observe?
* How were type of interviews, frequency of interviews, interviewing purposes, and interviewing techniques affected by time of day and type of program?
* How realistic were the interviews portrayed in dramas, comedies, and soap operas?
* How would you react to the statement: "The electronic medium is little more than televised dyadic communication?"

Variation:

- Keep a log of interviewing situations.
- Observe in all mass media (radio, television, film, print) during a seven-day period.
- Compare and contrast the types, uses, and techniques of interviews employed by the different media.

Exercise 1.3: To Interview or Not to Interview?

Objective:

To make you aware of the ways to use interviews or other methods (questionnaires, reading, observation) to gather information.

Activity:

In class, pick two or three current issues. Choose one of the issues picked, and develop a series of questions designed to discover people's attitudes toward, and knowledge about, the issue. Design a series of questions to represent a variety of question types. Give a copy of these questions to a friend, neighbor, or parent to answer in writing without your being present. Use a second copy of these questions in a face-to-face interview with a friend, neighbor, or parent. Take a copy of these questions to the library and seek answers to them in magazines, newspapers, books, and reference sources.

Discussion:

* How thorough and insightful were answers obtained through the written responses?
* How thorough and insightful were answers obtained through the interviews?
* How thorough and insightful were answers obtained through the library research?
* What were the advantages and disadvantages of the interview approach to gathering information?
* When and why should we rely on the interview for gathering information and discovering attitudes?
* Under what circumstances would it be unnecessary to seek written answers, interview answers, or library answers?

Set 2.
LEARNING THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERVIEWING

Exercise 2.1: What Did the Interviewer/Interviewee Say without Saying It?

Objective:

Your opportunity to observe all facets of nonverbal communication in interviews: silence, voice, eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, head movements, body movements, posture, and seating arrangement.

Exercise

Two students will demonstrate a five-minute information-giving interview. The two students will leave the classroom for a few minutes. While they are gone, place two chairs several feet apart in the center or front of the room. Tell the remaining students to observe all nonverbal communication that takes place, beginning with the way the interview parties arrange their chairs, and ending when they close the interview. Call the interview party back into the room, and let the interview proceed. During the interview, student A will explain in detail his or her hobby or a favorite game to student B.

Discussion

Engage in class discussion of the following questions:

* How did the interview parties arrange their chairs?
* How did arrangement affect the interview?
* How did nonverbal communication aid in opening the interview?
* How did the interviewer use nonverbal communication to explain the hobby or game?
* What aspects of the hobby or game were explained solely through nonverbal communication?

* How did the interviewee use nonverbal communication to show interest, to raise questions, to show understanding, to express puzzlement?
* How did nonverbal communication complement verbal communication? (For example, showing two fingers when saying "two.")
* How did nonverbal communication substitute for verbal communication? (For example, a nod instead of a verbal "yes.")
* How did both parties use nonverbal communication to close the interview?
* How did nonverbal cues precede verbal cues in signaling that the closing was commencing?
* Which means of nonverbal communication did student observers note most: silence, voice, eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, head movements, body movements, posture, seating arrangement? What does this tell us about the role of nonverbal communication in interviews?

Exercise 2.2: What If We Don't Speak the Same Language?

Objective

To provide students with experiences in getting over language barriers during information-giving interviews such as those between a doctor and patient or an expert consultant and client. In an information-giving interview, the interviewer is the knowledgeable one who must ascertain through appropriate interviewing techniques whether technical, possibly jargon-laden, information is being received by the less-well-informed interviewee.

Exercise

Divide students into pairs according to their levels of knowledge about a technical or complicated hobby, game, process, procedure, or occupation. The interviewer should be an *expert* on the topic, and the interviewee should know little or nothing about the topic. The interviewer will have five-to-seven minutes to explain the hobby, game, process, procedure, or occupation as clearly and completely as possible. At the end of the interviews, interviewees reveal their knowledge and understanding of the topic through oral or written reports.

Discussion

Discuss the following questions as a group: How did interviewers and interviewees try to handle potentially difficult language situations: technical jargon, ambiguities, unusual uses of common words, seldom used words, similar sounding words with different meanings?

* How successful were they?
* How did language barriers affect the ability of the interviewers to transmit information accurately and thoroughly?
* How did language barriers affect the ability of the interviewees to receive and report information accurately and thoroughly?

* How can we account for the failures of interview parties to eliminate language barriers?

Variation

Have each student contact a person not connected with the class. This person should have expertise in a hobby, game, process, procedure or occupation that the student would like to learn more about. Students write reports containing the information they receive. Important by-products of this variation are experiences in the "real world," contacts with experts in a variety of topics, and valuable knowledge of occupations and topics.

Exercise 2.3: My View Is Not Your View.

Objective

To illustrate how each person's physical and psychological makeup, geographical background, and experiences affect frames of reference and stereotypes — ways of viewing people, places, things, events, and ideas.

Exercise

Ask your students to take a piece of paper and pencil, and prepare to write down the first meaning or image that comes to mind upon hearing a series of words or phrases. First, give a series of single words such as "game," "large city," "sail," and "bowl." Pause between words to give students time to write what first comes to mind. Do not explain or repeat words. Second, give a series of descriptions such as "British banker," "female physical education major," "medical doctor," "elementary school teacher," "Midwest farmer," "college professor," and "Southern politician." Pause long enough between descriptive phrases to give students time to describe in detail the images that come to mind. Third, taking one word or phrase at a time, have each student relate what came to mind upon hearing the word or phrase.

Discussion

Discuss these questions together:

* How did meanings and images vary from student to student?
* Why did specific meanings and images come to mind?
* How were meanings and images affected by different peoples' age, sex, race, ethnic group, religion, family background, geographical background, hobbies, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences?
* How did people assign meanings to different words that sound the same? (For example "sail" and "sale," "bowl" and "bowl.")

- How did people interpret words with the same spelling and sound such as "bowl" (soup bowl, bowling ball, and football bowl game)?
- How might these different images and meanings affect interviews?
- How can interviewers and interviewees eliminate or minimize these communication problems?

Exercise 2.4: Did You Hear That?

Objective

To make students aware of listening problems and how they affect interviews.

Exercise

Select several controversial topics, one for each class period, and assign, or have four or five students volunteer as, interviewers for each period. Interviewers are to discover everything they can in five-to-seven minutes about the interviewee's attitudes and beliefs concerning the controversy. The interviewee (depending on the age and sophistication of your students you may want to play the part of the interviewee) should take a polar position on the controversy, insert an occasional invective or strongly worded statement, and maintain a serious attitude toward the topic and interview. Interviewers should enter the room one at a time so that interviews will not be affected by prior student interviews.

Tape-record each interview. After each interview, the interviewer writes a report on what he or she heard during the interview. The interviewer then listens to the tape recording and compares his or her recollection with what actually transpired.

Discussion

Discuss these questions in class:

* Which approaches to listening dominated the interviews: comprehension, empathy, or judgment?
* How did selection of listening approach or approaches affect the quantity, quality, and accuracy of information recalled?
* How can students account for listening problems?
* How did their pre-interview positions on the controversies affect listening?

* How did the interviewee's use of invective or strongly worded statements affect listening?
* What recommendations do students have to improve listening during interviews?

Exercise 2.5: How Do I Start This Thing?

Objective

To introduce students to the functions and types of openings in interviews.

Exercise

Review the functions of openings: to establish rapport, to orient interviewees, and to establish role relationships. Review opening techniques, and emphasize that two or more techniques are often combined in effective openings. Divide the class into groups of three or four, and provide each group with a different hypothetical setting, such as these:

1. You are to take part in an interview on October 12, but two highly important, time-consuming projects in other courses will make it very difficult to prepare adequately for the interview. Your job is to convince your interviewing-course instructor to postpone your interview.
2. You need to have a course assignment clarified, but you have arrived at your instructor's office just ten minutes before another course is to begin.
3. You are conducting a door-to-door survey of student attitudes toward final examinations. The interviews are taking place in a residence hall.

Each student prepares an opening for the hypothetical setting assigned. At the beginning of the class period, the interviewers leave the room. Then one interviewer at a time reenters the room, and he or she proceeds until the interview opening is completed. When all the openings are complete for a given setting, as a class discuss the various opening techniques and combinations employed and how they were appropriate or inappropriate for the setting. Proceed to the next hypothetical setting, send the interviewers out of the room, and repeat the process.

Discussion

As a class, ponder the following questions:

* Which opening techniques and combinations did the interviewers use?
* Which techniques were dictated by each setting?
* Which techniques and combinations appeared to be most effective?
* Which were least effective?
* Which techniques were not employed?
* What explanations do the interviewers offer for not using this or that technique?
* What roles did nonverbal communication play in the openings?
* How did the interviewers try to involve interviewees in the openings?

Exercise 2.6: What Comes in Between?

Objective

To make students aware of question patterns and structural patterns employed in interviews.

Exercise

Select several sample interviews representing a variety of situations:

- a survey interview
- an employment interview
- a journalistic interview
- a counseling interview
- a sales interview
- an appraisal interview

(A) Have your students determine the role(s) that questions played in the interviews. If the role(s) was major, see if students can identify one or more question patterns such as funnel sequence, inverted funnel sequence, tunnel sequence, and quintamensional design.

(B) Divide each interview into major divisions: opening, body, closing. Have your students determine the approximate amount of time and proportion devoted to each division.

(C) Consider the proportions within the interview of each division. If possible, divide the body of the interview into meaningful parts. Have your students suggest alternative sequences, divisions, and parts for each interview.

Discussion

Think together about the following:

* Which question sequences were used?
* What difficulties were encountered in identifying sequences?
* How did the interview situation (counseling, employment, appraisal, survey, sales, journalistic) influence the selection and nature of sequences?

* What difficulties were encountered in dividing interviews into opening, body, and closing?
* How did the interview situation affect the amount of time devoted to each division?
* How did the proportions of the divisions affect the whole interview?
* How might interviewers have structured their interviews differently?
* More effectively?

Exercise 2.7: How Do I Close This Thing?

Objective

To introduce students to the functions and techniques of closing interviews.

Exercise

Review the functions of closings:

- to summarize findings, agreements, and solutions
- to maintain rapport established during the interview
- to make a final appeal
- to reveal what happens next
- to prepare the way for future contacts

Review closing techniques and how they may be combined. Divide the class into groups of three or four, and provide each group with a hypothetical interviewing situation such as the following:

1. You have been trying to convince your interviewing instructor to postpone your scheduled interview because of two highly important and time-consuming projects in other courses that will make it difficult to prepare adequately for the interview. The decision is to try to swap dates with someone else in the class.
2. You wanted a course assignment clarified, but you arrived at your instructor's office just ten minutes before the start of another course. You are told that the assignment cannot be discussed at this time.
3. You are conducting a door-to-door survey of student attitudes toward final examinations. You now have the information you want from a student.

Each student prepares a closing for a specific hypothetical situation. At the beginning of the class period, interviewers leave the room, and then reenter one at a time to proceed with a closing. When all closings are completed for a particular hypothetical situation, discuss the various closing techniques and combinations employed. Proceed to the next hypothetical situation, send the interviewers from the room, and repeat the process.

Discussion

* Which closing techniques and combinations did interviewers use?
* Which techniques were dictated by the situation?
* Which techniques and combinations were most effective?
* How can the class account for techniques not employed?
* What roles did nonverbal communication play in closings?
* How did interviewers involve interviewees in closings?

Exercise 2.8: What Kind of Question Was That?

Objective

To aid students in learning the types and uses of questions.

Exercise

Prepare a list of twenty unrelated questions such as these:

- Tell me about yourself.
- You like close detail work, don't you?
- Why do you think that happened?
- Go on...
- How old is your car?
- Is there anything else I should know before today's meeting?
- Did you vote in the last presidential election?
- Are you saying that you regret having changed jobs?
- Tell me more about your program in industrial engineering.
- What do you see in that jerk?

Have students identify each question according to these categories:

- open or closed
- primary or secondary
- neutral or leading
- possibly of a special type
  - bipolar, reflective probe
  - mirror
  - loaded
  - clearinghouse probe
  - informational probe
  - nudging probe

Discuss how different contexts and situations tend to change the ways in which each question is identified. Have students alter questions verbally and nonverbally to change them from open to closed, primary to secondary, neutral to leading, and so on. For instance, students can change the second question from "leading" to "neutral" by asking, "Do you like close detail work?" Students can change the third question from a neutral nudging probe to a leading question by altering the way it is intoned: "Go on!" Finally, have students give reasons why an interviewer might use each type of question on the list.

Discussion

Engage in class discussions of the following questions:

* Which questions were most difficult to identify?
* What were the easiest means of altering questions, and what does this ease tell us about the pitfalls of asking questions?
* How can we tell when a question is a neutral reflective or mirror question, and not a leading question?
* What does this exercise reveal about use of bipolar questions, leading questions, and highly closed questions?

Exercise 2.9: Formulate a Good Probing Question.

Objective

To aid students in detecting what is wrong with a response, and constructing an appropriate probing or secondary question.

Exercise

Prepare a series of questions and answers that require students to ask probing or secondary questions. For example, an answer may be incomplete, vague, superficial, inaccurate, suggestible, or off–target. Or the question may elicit no response. Include questions and responses such as these:

1. Interviewer: If the election were being held today, for whom would you vote?

   Interviewee: Oh, I don't know.

   Interviewer:

2. Interviewer: How did you like the play?

   Interviewee: At first it was rather boring.

   Interviewer:

3. Interviewer: How do you feel about OSHA?

   Interviewee: (no response)

   Interviewer:

4. Interviewer: What were your favorite subjects in high school?

   Interviewee: Algebra.

   Interviewer:

5. Interviewer: When did you start to work for us?

   Interviewee: April 31, 1987.

   Interviewer:

First, have students identify the problem(s) with each answer. Then have students provide appropriate secondary or probing questions. Do not allow students to

ask new primary questions even if they are related to the initial interchange. They must phrase questions that would obtain the information originally asked for.

Discussion

Discuss the questions in class:

* What is wrong with each answer?
* Is the problem the fault of the interviewer or interviewee?
* In what ways can this problem be attacked so that the desired information can be attained?
* How might an interviewee respond to each proposed secondary question?
* What new problems might proposed secondary questions create?

Exercise 2.10: What's Wrong With This Question?

Objective

To aid students in understanding and applying the criteria for question phrasing and usage.

Exercise

Prepare a list of unrelated questions, and provide information concerning the interview situation and location of the question during the interview. Here are five:

1. Are you familiar with the philosophical principles of the NRA? [first question in an on-the-street broadcast interview about the National Rifle Association and gun control]
2. That wasn't a good reason to quit a job, was it? [a probing question in an employment interview]
3. What is your definition of "euthanasia?" What comes to mind when you hear euthanasia mentioned? [first two questions in an attitude survey on euthanasia]
4. What are your reactions to the murder case now going on in Boston? [question during an interview on capital punishment]
5. How often do you obey highway speed limits? (a) most of the time (b) when convenient (c) seldom [question on a survey of driving habits]

Have students identify what is wrong with each question, and recommend ways for the question to be altered to meet criteria for question wording and selection. For instance, the first question assumes that the respondent knows what the letters NRA stand for, and what "philosophical principles" means for any organization. It also asks for a simple yes or no answer that would reveal nothing about the extent of the respondent's familiarity with the NRA or its philosophy.

Discussion

Discuss the interview issues regarding all questions:

* Which criteria does each question fail to satisfy?
* What problems might occur because of these weaknesses: inaccurate data, false assumptions, biased answers, meaningless generalizations, loss of respondent motivation?
* How can these weaknesses be corrected?
* How do interviewing situation and location of the question in the interview affect the phrasing and use of questions?

Exercise 2.11: Watch Out For That Pitfall!

Objective

To make students aware of common question pitfalls and how to avoid them.

Exercise

Formulate a series of unrelated questions that exhibit a common question pitfall: bipolar trap, open-to-closed switch, double-barrelled, leading push, and guessing game. Here are some examples:

1. Tell me about yourself, your family, and future plans.
2. Do you think the accident happened because of wet pavement?
3. Tell me about your interests. Do you like sports?
4. Don't you think it's time to make up your mind?
5. Did you like the field trip?

Have students identify the pitfall(s) that each question illustrates, and rephrase it to make it a good question. Warn students to avoid digging a new pitfall when rephrasing a question. For example, a bipolar trap question can become a leading push.

Discussion

Discuss your results at rephrasing questions:

* Which pitfall does each question illustrate?
* How can each be altered to eliminate the pitfall without falling into another?
* How easy is it to detect common question pitfalls?
* Why are these called pitfalls?
* What problems do they pose for interviewers?
* What problems do they pose for interviewees?
* How can we avoid common question pitfalls?

Set 3.
PRACTICING INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Exercise 3.1: Ice-breaker Interviews

Objective

To provide students with simple, non-stressful experiences that allow them to conduct a total interview: opening, questions, responses, and closing.

Exercise

Divide the class into trios, designating one student in each trio as interviewer, one as interviewee, and one as observer. Interviewers will have five minutes to discover everything they can about their interviewees:

- education
- family
- hobbies
- interests
- academic majors
- courses they are taking
- future plans

Interviewees will respond as they see fit. Observers are to note the following:

- how the interviews were started and ended
- questions asked
- question sequences
- question pitfalls
- answers given
- role switches
- listening skills
- and nonverbal communication

At the end of four-and-one-half minutes, tell interviewers they have thirty seconds to close their interviews. Begin

round two immediately, having students within each trio exchange roles. At the end of another five minutes, begin round three with students exchanging roles once more.

Discussion:

Review the interviews together:

* How did interviewers begin and end interviews?
* What may have accounted for different opening and closing techniques?
* What topics dominated these interviews, and how can we account for this?
* How did lack of preparation and interviewing experience affect interviews?
* If these had been carefully planned interviews, what might interviewers have done differently to make them more effective?
* Were there communication breakdowns? If so, what were possible causes?
* How were questions and answers communicated nonverbally?
* What listening approaches dominated these interviews?
* How effectively did each party listen to questions and answers?

Exercise 3.2: The Difficulties of Transmitting Information

Objective

To make students aware of the difficulties encountered when transmitting information through interviews.

Exercise

Compose three paragraphs that deal with an event, place, or person; or have your students compose them. Include names, dates, statistics, and other facts in every paragraph.

At the beginning of this exercise, ask for volunteers or select four or five students, and send them out of the room. Give copies of one of the paragraphs to each of the remaining students. Tell them to record what happens to the information in the paragraph as it is passed orally from memory to memory, from student to succeeding student.

Bring in the first person, and read aloud the short paragraph. No questions or repetitions are allowed. When you have read the paragraph, bring in a second student, and explain that he or she will receive a brief message from the first student and will then pass the information on the the next student. Continue the exercise until the last student transmits the message to the class.

Discuss what happened to the message.

Using a second paragraph, select another four or five students, and give copies of the message to the remaining class members. The instructions remain the same except that each student may ask three simple questions about information in the message after hearing all of the message. Go through the process and then discuss what happened to this message.

Using the third paragraph, proceed as before except that each information transmitter gives the message twice (one

repetition) to the receiver. Discuss what happened to this message.

Discussion

Here are some questions for a class discussion:

* What kinds of materials were deleted from messages as they were transmitted from person to person?
* How were messages altered?
* What information was added to messages?
* How can students account for these deletions, alterations, and additions?
* How did asking questions help or hinder the accurate and complete transmission of message number two?
* How could receivers have made wiser use of questions? (e.g., during the message instead of after the message was completed)
* How did the repetitions of the third message help or hinder its transmission from person to person?
* How could these repetitions have been more effective?
* If students were doing this exercise again, what would they do to insure more effective information transmission?

Exercise 3.3: Effective Ways of Transmitting Information

Objective:

To give students an opportunity to experiment with a variety of methods of transmitting information through interviews.

Exercise:

Prepare several 600-word messages containing names, dates, statistics, descriptions, definitions, qualifying words such as "probably" and "maybe," and technical or professional jargon. Give a copy of each message to four or five students. Each is to prepare a five-to-six-minute interview designed to transmit this message accurately and completely to a second party consisting of two other students. Interviewers are to use all available means to transmit information:

- questions
- repetitions
- feedback
- outlines
- pictures
- charts
- verbal emphasis

At the beginning of each class period, interviewers and interviewees for a particular message leave the room. One interviewer and a party of two interviewees enter the room for an interview. Upon completion of the interview, the receiving party leaves the room to write down the message received. The second interview then begins, and the process is repeated until all interviewers have transmitted their assigned messages. Each receiving party returns to the classroom and relates the message received. The transmitted messages are compared with the original for additions, deletions, and alterations.

Discussion

How did they do?

* Which interviewer was most successful in transmitting the message?
* How can students account for this?
* Which techniques seemed most successful?
* Which seemed least successful?
* Which aspects of the message (statistics, names, dates, technical jargon, qualifier words) were most difficult to transmit accurately and completely?
* Which unused techniques could have aided these interviews?

Exercise 3.4: Probing for Information

Objective

To provide students with a challenging experience in gathering information that requires careful listening and extensive use of secondary or probing questions.

Exercise

Divide the class into groups of five or six, and prepare for each group a different "case" consisting of facts and testimony about an incident: disaster, murder, lawsuit, accident, happening at school, and so on. The cases should be two or three single-spaced, typed pages, and they are to include a variety of facts and testimony, some of which is contradictory. Provide students in each group with a brief descriptive setting for their cases. For example, the setting for a Scoutmaster's actions during a disaster that struck a Scout campout might look like this:

> *Several years ago a natural disaster struck a Boy Scout camp near Elizabeth, Tennessee. Local residents have now written to the Baker Hero Fund Commission urging that Rex Ingram be awarded its silver medal for his actions during the disaster. The Commission has sent you to Tennessee to interview a person who has collected facts and statements from several residents.* (Kerr, 1962; Stewart, 1991).

Setting descriptions should not include any important or revealing information about the case. Only you, the instructor who will act as interviewee, should know the details. Each student first prepares an interview guide containing areas and sub–areas of information that he or she thinks important to probe. After the guide is drafted, the student prepares a moderately scheduled interview with primary and some secondary questions. One case is used each day. At the beginning of the class, interviewers for the day leave the classroom. One interviewer enters at a time, conducts a seven–minute interview, and then goes

to a room to write a brief report on information obtained during the interview.

As the interviewee, be absolutely honest, but give only the information that your interviewers ask for in each question. Answer bipolar questions yes or no without elaboration. Answer open-ended questions with a sentence or two. The intent is to force the interviewer to ask appropriate questions, listen carefully, and probe into answers.

The class will have the opportunity to observe several different approaches to getting the same information, from the same interviewee, about the same case. When all interviews are completed for the day, interviewers return to the classroom, and then read their brief reports on the case to show the information that they received. Now you can reveal any information not discovered during the interviews.

Discussion

Questions for discussion:

* How can we explain the remarkable success of some interviewers and the relative failure of others?
  - the interview guide
  - schedule of questions
  - phrasing of questions
  - selection of appropriate question types
  - listening
  - patience to stick with an area until all important information is obtained
  - ability to adapt original guide and schedule as the interview unfolds.
* What major problems did interviewers encounter?
  - unexpected answers or information

- a reluctant interviewee
- impatience
- attempts to guess information instead of asking for it
- time limit
- pre-interview assumptions
- difficulty of the case

* Why was some information rarely or never obtained?
* Did the interviewee unintentionally mislead interviewers?
* How could interviewers work less and make interviewees work harder?

Exercise 3.5: Surveying Opinions and Attitudes

Objective

To provide students with an experience in preparing and conducting a highly scheduled/highly scheduled, standardized interview to discover opinions and attitudes (see page 19).

Exercise

Students select current local, state, national, or international issues and research them. Students then prepare highly scheduled/highly scheduled, standardized interviewing instruments for ten-minute attitude/opinion surveys. Instruments are to include an opening, all questions to be asked, answer spaces or options where appropriate, and a closing. Require students to employ a variety of survey question types and tactics as well as open questions, bipolar questions, and leading questions.

Divide the class into trios for three rounds of interviews. During round one, person A in each trio will be interviewer, person B will be interviewee, and person C will be a critic-observer. Stop the interviews at the end of ten minutes, and have the members of each trio exchange roles for round two. Continue as before until a third round is completed. After all interviews are completed, students are to hand in their interviewing schedules and critique forms.

Discussion

For all-class reflection on the trio interviews:

* Did some question-and-answer options require explanations?
* How could this problem be avoided?
* How did respondents react to leading questions?
* Did bipolar questions elicit bipolar answers?
* How did respondents answer open questions?

* What problems did interviewers encounter with recording answers?
* How did the highly scheduled/highly scheduled, standardized instrument affect nonverbal communication?
* How was the atmosphere of this interview similar to, and different from, that of probing interviews?
* How did lack of opportunity to probe into answers affect the information received?

Exercise 3.6: A Notetaking Exercise

Objective

To make students aware of the techniques and problems of note taking during interviews.

Exercise

Students prepare seven-to-eight-minute information-getting interviews that contain a variety of open-ended questions, including informational, nudging, clearing-house, and reflective secondary questions. Interviewers take detailed notes during interviews as if they were going to write a detailed report later. The class and participants should focus attention on note-taking techniques and the apparent effects of note taking on the verbal and nonverbal communication between interview parties.

Discussion

Questions about note taking:

* Which note-taking techniques did interviewers employ?
* Which of these interfered most and which least with verbal and nonverbal communication between interview parties?
* How did note taking affect the smooth, conversational flow of the interview?
* How much interview time was consumed by note taking?
* Was there evidence of interviewee curiosity of what was being written down?
* How can interviewers take adequate notes and maintain effective communication?

Exercise 3.7: An Employment Screening Interview

Objective

To provide students with realistic experiences as applicants and employers in screening interviews.

Exercise

Each student provides two copies (one for the employer and one for the instructor) of a resumé, application form, and detailed job description. The job description is to include the following about the organization:

- name
- location
- products/services
- background and history
- current status
- information about the position
  - ✓ duties and responsibilities
  - ✓ advancement possibilities
  - ✓ salary range
  - ✓ fringe benefits
- information about the applicant
  - ✓ required skills
  - ✓ abilities
  - ✓ education/training
  - ✓ experiences

Students acting as employers become recruiters for the organizations with the available positions for which the students acting as applicants are applying. Interviews will be fourteen minutes long, plus closing. Each student will also serve as an observer/critic for an interview between two other students. All interviews must include appropriate portions devoted to the following:

- opening
- employer questions
- information giving
- applicant questions
- closing.

Discussion:

Would they have gotten the job?

* How were interviews structured, and which structures seemed most successful?
* How adequate were interviews proportioned: Enough time for information giving and applicant questions?
* What were the strengths and weaknesses of employer questions?
* How effectively did employers provide thorough and important information?
* What were the strengths and weaknesses of applicant questions?
* What problems did employers and applicants encounter?
* How effectively did both employers and applicants avoid unlawful questions or respond to them when they occurred?

Exercise 3.8: A Determinate Employment Interview

Objective

To introduce students to the determinate interview after which a hiring decision will take place.

Exercise

Select three or four students to serve as applicants, and divide the remainder of the class into groups of four or five. Each group will then become employees of an organization such as Ford Motor Company, Sears and Roebuck, General Hospital, Montgomery County Schools, and so on. Each student plays a specific role within the organization such as personnel director, sales manager, head of research and development, chief engineer, school superintendant, or plant manager.

Acting as a job applicant, the student applicant is assigned to each organization, and provides a resumé and a completed application form. Employers have the detailed evaluation forms that were filled out by their recruiters following the screening interviews in Set 3, Exercise 7. During each of the next three or four class periods, a thirty-five to forty-minute determinate interview will take place. Vary the formats. For instance, one day have all employers, as a committee, interview the applicant. On another day, have the applicant remain in the room while individual interviewers come and go. On a third day have the applicant leave the room after each interview and return, to simulate going from office to office.

Discussion

Group reflection on the determinate interview process:

* What are the major differences between screening and determinate interviews?
* What problems were encountered in coordinating screening and determinate interviews?

* What problems resulted from having more than one interviewer taking part at the same time?
* What problems seem unique to the determinate interview, and how can these be avoided?
* What were the strengths and weaknesses of determinate interviewers?
* What were the strengths and weaknesses of determinate applicants?
* Which format seemed most effective and least effective?
* How can applicants prepare most effectively for determinate interviews?

Exercise 3.9: Avoiding and Responding to Unlawful Questions

Objective

To aid students in understanding the kinds of questions that violate fair-employment-practices law, and how to respond to them when they are asked.

Exercise

Prepare a series of lawful and unlawful questions that employers might ask during screening or determinate employment interviews. Unlawful questions pertain to the following personal and private matters:

- ✓ age
- ✓ sex
- ✓ race
- ✓ religious preference
- ✓ political affiliation
- ✓ ethnic background
- ✓ arrest record

Ask your students to identify each question as either lawful or unlawful. If a question is determined to be unlawful, have your students explain why. If possible, rephrase the question to make it lawful. Then have them explain how they might respond to this unlawful question during an interview.

Discussion:

Think together about the problems of unlawful questions during an interview:

* Which areas of potential discrimination were most common and easiest to detect?

- ✓ age
- ✓ sex
- ✓ race
- ✓ ethnic background

- ✓ religious preference
- ✓ political affiliation
- ✓ arrest record

* Which unlawful areas are most likely to occur by accident or tradition rather than by intention?
* How can preparation help employers avoid asking unlawful questions?
* How can employers avoid asking unlawful questions during interviews?
* Which unlawful questions are easy to rephrase into lawful questions?
* What advice would you give to applicants about unlawful questions?

  (1) as they prepare for interviews

  (2) while they are taking part in interviews
* Which techniques seemed most effective in responding to unlawful questions?
* What problems did unlawful questions pose for applicants?
* What are the most important things you have learned from this exercise?

Exercise 3.10: A Field Interview Experience

Objective

To give students opportunities to conduct lengthy "real-life" information interviews outside the classroom.

Exercise

Students prepare and conduct hour-long interviews with persons in their intended career fields:

- ✓ teaching
- ✓ journalism
- ✓ engineering
- ✓ business
- ✓ sales
- ✓ advertising
- ✓ health care
- ✓ law
- ✓ broadcasting
- ✓ agriculture
- ✓ building trades
- ✓ numerous others

Preparation includes the following:

- ✓ careful selection of an interviewee
- ✓ background research and reading
- ✓ preparation of an interview guide
- ✓ transformation of the guide into a moderate schedule of primary and secondary questions

Following the interviews, students turn in a written report that includes these items:

- ✓ schedule used
- ✓ a thorough self–critique of the interviews
- ✓ a detailed summary of the information obtained during the interviews

Discussion

Talk together about the uses of an information interview:

* How successful was the selection of interviewees?
* How did preparation help or hinder the interviews?
* How effective were openings and closings?
* How useful were the prepared schedules?
* How much unplanned probing into answers was needed to get desired information?
* Which probing techniques were most necessary and useful?
* What problems did note taking pose?
* What problems were encountered when writing up the results?
* What would students do differently if they were doing the assignment over again?
* How might an information interview eventually lead to getting a job?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READINGS

Alwin, Duane F. *Survey Design and Analysis: Current Issues.* Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1978.

Anderson, David and Benjaminson, Peter. *Investigative Reporting.* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1976.

Arvey, Richard D. and Campion, James E. "The Employment Interview: A Summary and Review of Recent Research," *Personnel Psychology* 35 (1982), 281–321.

Axtmann, Lowell and Jablin, Fredric M. "Distributional and Sequential Interaction Structure in the Employment Selection Interview," unpublished paper, Annual Convention of the International Communication Association, Chicago, 1986.

Banaka, William H. *Training in Depth Interviewing.* New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

Benjamin, Alfred. *The Helping Interview.* Boston: Houghton–Mifflin, 1987.

Bittner, John R. and Bittner, Denise A. *Radio Journalism.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice–Hall, 1977.

Bloom, Robert and Prien, Erich P. "A Guide for Job-Related Employment Interviewing," *Personnel Administrator* 28 (1983), 81–86.

Bolles, Richard N. *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press, 1990.

Brand, John. *Hello, Good Evening and Welcome: A Guide for Being Interviewed on Television and Radio.* London: Shaw, 1977.

Buckingham, Graeme. "Using Structured Interviews to Measure Job Success," *Personnel Management* 17 (1985), 99.

Cogger, John W. *Seven Imperatives: Fair and Effective Interviewing.* New York: Drake Beam Morin, 1980.

Crystal, John C. and Bolles, Richard N. *Where Do I Go from Here with My Life?* New York: Seabury Press, 1980.

Dalessio, Anthony and Imada, Andrew S. "Relationships between Selection Decisions and Perceptions of Applicant Similarity to an Ideal Employee and Self: A Field Study," *Human Relations* 37 (1984), 67–80.

Daly, John A.; Richmond, Virginia Peck; and Leth, Steven, "Social Communicative Anxiety and the Personnel Selection Process: Testing the Similarity Effect in Selection Decisions," *Human Communication Research* 6 (1979), 18–32.

Dillman, Don A. *Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method.* New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1978.

Donaghy, William C. *The Interview: Skills and Applications.* Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1984.

Donaho, Melvin W. and Meyer, John L. *How to Get the Job You Want.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice–Hall, 1976.

Downs, Cal W.; Smeyak, G. Paul; and Martin, Ernest. *Professional Interviewing.* New York: Harper & Row, 1980.

Eder, Robert W. and Ferris, Gerald R. *The Employment Interview: Theory, Research, and Practice.* Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1989.

Einhorn, Lois J. *Interviewing . . . A Job in Itself.* Bloomington, Indiana: The Career Center, 1977.

Einhorn, Lois J.; Bradley, Patricia Hayes; and Baird, John E., Jr. *Effective Employment Interviewing: Unlocking Human Potential.* Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1981.

Einhorn, Lois J. "An Inner View of the Job Interview: An Investigation of Successful Communicative Behavior," *Communication Education* 30 (1981), 217-228.

Fowler, Floyd J. and Mangione, Thomas W. *Standardized Survey Interviewing.* Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1989.

Frey, James H. *Survey Research by Telephone.* Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1989.

Gallup, George. "The Quintamensional Plan of Question Design," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 11 (1947), 385.

Gorden, Raymond L. *Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques, and Tactics.* Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1987.

Gottlieb, Marvin. *Interview.* New York: Longmans, 1986.

Goyer, Robert S.; Redding, W. Charles; and Rickey, John T. *Interviewing Principles and Techniques: A Project Text.* Dubuque, Iowa: Brown, 1968.

Hilton, Jack. *On Television! A Survival Guide for Media Interviews.* New York: AMACOM, 1980.

Hunt, Gary T. and Eadie, William F. *Interviewing: A Communication Approach.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1987.

Hutchinson, Marilyn A. and Spooner, Sue E., *Job Search Barometer.* Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: The College Placement Council, 1975.

Jablin, Fredric M., "Use of Discriminatory Questions in Screening Interviews," *Personnel Administrator,* 27 (1982), 41-44.

Jablin, Fredric M. and Tengler, Craig D., "Facing Discrimination in On-Campus Interviews," *Journal of College Placement,* 42 (1982), 57-61.

Kahn, Robert L. and Cannell, Charles F. *The Dynamics of Interviewing.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1982.

Kerr, Harry P. *Opinion and Evidence: Cases for Argumentation and Discussion.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962.

Killenberg, George M., and Anderson, Rob. *Before the Story: Interviewing and Communication Skills for the Journalist.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Krivonos, Paul D. and Knapp, Mark L. "Initiating Communication: What Do You Say When You Say Hello?" *Central States Speech Journal* 26 (1975), 115-125.

Knapp, Mark L.; Hart, Roderick P.; Friedrich, Gustav W.; and Shulman, Gary M. "The Rhetoric of Goodbye: Verbal and Nonverbal Correlates of Human Leave-Taking," *Speech Monographs* 40 (1973), 182–198.

Lee, Irving J. *How to Talk with People.* New York: Harper & Row, 1952.

Leonard, Rebecca. "Attending: Letting the Patient Know You Are Listening," *Journal of Practical Nursing* 33 (1983), 28-29.

Ley, P. "What the Patient Doesn't Remember," *Medical Opinion Review* 1 (1966), 69–73.

Long, Lynette; Paradise, Louis V.; and Long, Thomas J. *Questioning: Skills for the Helping Process.* Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole, 1981.

Metzler, Ken. *Creative Interviewing.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1989.

Meyer, John L. and Donaho, Melvin W. *Get the Right Person for the Job.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979.

Meyer, Philip. *Precision Journalism.* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1979.

Mishler, Elliot G. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Newman, Barry. "Expanded Employee Rights Increase Liability Exposure," *Journal of Compensation and Benefits* 4 (1989), 204-208.

Orpen, Christopher. "Patterned Behavior Description Interviews Versus Unstructured Interviews: A Comparative Validity Study," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 70 (1985), 774-776.

Payne, Stanley L. *The Art of Asking Questions.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951.

Redding, W. Charles. *How to Conduct a Readership Survey: A Guide for Organizational Editors and Communications Managers.* Chicago: Lawrence Ragan Communications, 1982.

Richardson, Stephen D.; Dohrenwend, Barbara S.; and Klein, David. *Interviewing: Its Forms and Functions.* New York: Basic Books, 1965.

Richetto, Gary M. and Zima, Joseph P. *Interviewing.* Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1982.

Rivers, William L. *Finding Facts.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975.

Royal, Robert F. and Schutt, Steven R. *The Gentle Art of Interviewing and Interrogation: A Professional Manual and Guide.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

Savage, Adrian. "Selection Tests: Using Past Behaviour to Predict Performance," *Personnel Management* 17 (1985), 51.

Schneider-Jenkins, Carol and Carr-Ruffino, Norma. "Smart Selection: Three Steps to Choosing New Employees," *Management World* 14 (1985), 38–39.

Shaeffer, Ruth G. *Nondiscrimination in Employment, 1973–1975: A Broadening and Deepening National Effort.* New York: The Conference Board, 1975.

Sherwood, Hugh C. *The Journalistic Interview.* New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

Siegel, Jerome. *Personnel Testing under EEO.* New York: AMACOM, 1980.

Sincoff, Michael Z. and Goyer, Robert S. *Interviewing.* New York: Macmillan, 1984.

Skopec, Eric W. *Situational Interviewing.* New York: Harper & Row, 1986.

Springston, Jeff K., and Keyton, Joann, "The Prevalence of Potentially Illegal Questions in Pre-Employment Screening," in S.J. Bruno (ed.), *Global Implications for Business Communications: Theory, Technology, and Practice,* Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association of Business Communication (1988), 247-263.

Stano, Michael C. and Reinsch, N.L., Jr. *Communication in Interviews.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1982.

Stewart, Charles J. and Cash, William B., Jr. *Interviewing: Principles and Practices.* Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1991.

Stewart, Charles J. *Interviewing Principles and Practices: A Project Text.* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1991.

Stewart, Charles J. "Teaching Interviewing," *Teaching Communication: Theory, Research, and Methods,* John A. Daly, Gustav W. Friedrich, and Anita L. Vangelisti (eds). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990.

Steil, Lyman K.; Barker, Larry L.; and Watson, Kittie W. *Effective Listening.* Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1983.

Tengler, Craig D. and Jablin, Fredric M. "Effects of Question Type, Orientation, and Sequencing in the Employment Screening Interview," *Communication Monographs* 50 (1983), 245-263.

Wicks, Robert J. and Josephs, Ernest H., Jr. *Techniques in Interviewing for Law Enforcement and Corrections Personnel.* Springfield, Illinois: Thomas, 1972.

Wilson, Gerald L. and Goodall, H. Lloyd, Jr. *Interviewing in Context.* New York: McGraw–Hill, 1991.

Wolvin, Andrew W. and Coakley, Carolyn G. *Listening.* Dubuque, Iowa: Brown, 1988.

Zima, Joseph P. *Interviewing: Key to Effective Management.* Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1983.

Zunin, Leonard and Zunin, Natalie. *Contact: The First Four Minutes.* Los Angeles: Nash, 1975.